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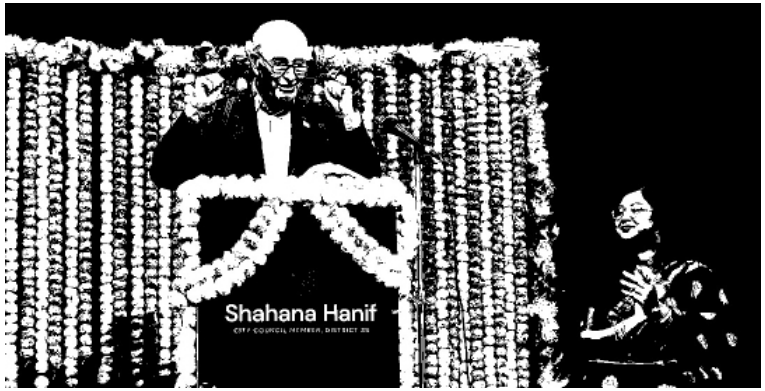
SOUTH ASIAN 'PROGRESSIVE' POLITICIANS in amerika



A Statement on CLASS ENEMIES & 'INTERSECTIONAL' IMPERIALISM

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caucus just left. The NYPD budget has of course continued to increase in her time as city councilor. And she's carried out the Democrats' violent austerity policies, signing off on $215 million in budget cuts to schools in 2022. Regardless of outcome, Hanif continues to collect her six-figure salary as city councilor.

Hanif's local reforms have been appropriately overshadowed by her capitulation to the Democratic Party line. In the wake of Al-Aqsa Flood, Hanif remained silent for five days before putting out a statement of grief for 'both sides' of the violence. When her community needed her voice the most, she neglected to bring a true light to the genocide in Gaza. Since then, she's joined liberal calls for a ceasefire, with a two-state solution in mind. Hanif stunted in doing a performative justice photo op where she engages in 'civil disobedience,' in the classic manner of liberal politicians who 'protest peacefully' all the time while working hand-in-hand with the police when doing so. These tactics are deployed to dampen and control class struggle. Politicians choose reform and non-violence to pacify the masses and stifle the emergence of sharper class consciousness. Meanwhile, in Bangladesh her father's party, the ruling Awami League, has police working with a state-backed student organization, Chhatra League, to brutally repress garment workers fighting for fair wages. Hanif props up her father to appeal to the interests of petty-bourgeois Bangladeshis who also have ties to the ruling classes in Bangladesh. Whether in amerika or South Asia, Hanif has proven herself a loyal servant of imperialism.

For the seed of genuine class solidarity to be planted and cultivated we cannot continue to normalize South Asian politicians. We must be vigilant in recognizing and combating their attempts to infiltrate, subvert, and liberalize revolutionary community-based organizing. From the 'progressives' to those who consciously think of themselves as 'radicals,' they are all class enemies. In *Night-Vision*, Butch Lee and Red Rover remind us of what "Amilcar Cabral said [sixty] years ago, neo-colonialism represents an imperialism that can take the form of anti-colonialism or even of 'socialism' if need be." It is on us to identify South Asian politicians' actual purpose in the belly of the beast. To build power beyond and against their poisonous reach and generalize rejection of these opportunists, we need to break with liberal representation politics and rid ourselves of the petty-bourgeois defeatism that settles for reform over revolution. Politicians *are* police.

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member and former President of the USA Awami League. In contrast to the pro-Palestinian progressive front Hanif holds among the people, she maintains strong connections to zionists through the Democratic Party Hanif's career as a Democratic Party politician began as an aide to zionist Brad Lander. She started as a liaison to the Bangladeshi community for the Democrats before more formally becoming Lander's Director of Organizing and Community Engagement. Hanif's early career lays out a prime example of the progressive opportunist rise to power.

Hanif is someone who can provide a connective thread between zionist organizations like the Democratic Party and the Bangladeshi community. She makes the zionists like Brad Lander credible to 'her' community of Bangladeshis, and in turn Lander showers Hanif with credibility inside the zionist, imperialist party itself. It is on this dual-front that Hanif, and many progressives like her, are elected. On one front, there is the Bangladeshi community that presumes Hanif holds progressive beliefs, like pro-Palestinian sentiment and even being part of Students for Justice in Palestine chapter. On the other front, there is the Democratic Party, which operates towards an imperialist agenda and because of this agenda, is prepared to prop up Hanif within the community. A look at her endorsers gives us insights into the contradictions in Hanif's politics. She is endorsed by staunch zionists like Harvey Epstein and Helen Rosenthal and by liberals like AOC that claim they support Palestine while condemning Hamas and funding the zionist entity's 'iron dome' defense system. Hanif continues to normalize zionists like Brad Lander and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer in the Bangladeshi community, even elevating them to the level of 'community leader.' Lander is now city comptroller, Hanif is city councilor, they're an opportunistic tandem that continues to rise together.

Since being elected to city council, Hanif's politics have been reflective of the New York City Progressive Caucus. The Progressive Caucus can be characterized by two key features: (1) the Caucus holds little to no political influence within the meaningful parts of the Democratic Party, (2) the Progressive Caucus cannot take any stand which fundamentally threatens the imperialist agenda of the party. One or both of these features define every step of Hanif's career as a city councilor. There have been moments that show how hilariously weak the progressive caucus in New York City really is, like when Hanif attempted to limit NYPD funding and half the

When any election is held it will fortify rather than destroy the credibility of the power brokers. When we participate in this election to win, instead of disrupt, we're lending to its credibility, and destroying our own.

Elections and political parties have no significance when all serious contenders for public office are fascist and the electorate is thoroughly misled about the true nature of the candidates.

—George Jackson, *Blood in My Eye*

Over the fifty years since the '60s–'70s peak of anti-colonial struggle within the u.s. settler empire, the official promotion of 'Black/brown faces in high places' has expanded dramatically. As E. Tani and Kaé Sera put it, "Neo-colonialism uses a facade of democracy ('native rule,' 'one man one vote,' etc.) to conceal continued domination." Absorbing the colonized and oppressed-nation petty bourgeoisie into state, corporate, academic, and non-profit sectors has been a key strategy of the u.s. ruling class. *False Nationalism False Internationalism* tells us this strategy first targeted the Black Liberation Movement: "persuading New Afrikans to get tied up in u.s. bourgeois politics and shooting down those who still dissented were joint parts of the same counterinsurgency plan—the ballot and the bullet."

In our context as Lal Morich OC and PAISA engaging in a united front, we come together recognizing how increasing numbers of fellow South Asians—and Third-World diasporic peoples more broadly—are becoming agents of the anti-Black settler state through their participation in the bourgeois 'democratic process.' To identify the enemy is easy, our task is to starve and deprive them of any legitimacy, and to foster proletarian anti-imperialist consciousness among the masses though concrete action. How do we expose the "true nature" of these politicians claiming to be 'for the people'? How do we encourage our South Asian siblings to militantly oppose and out-organize in quality, then quantity, their South Asian class enemies?

Both major parties uphold settlerism and capitalism, however only the Democratic Party has excelled at recruiting so many Third-World peoples into its electoral game. In putting a 'multi-cultural' and 'progressive' spin on a vicious bloodsoaked empire, we believe these neo-colonial puppets

have proven far more lethal to advancing proletarian power than any openly far-right reactionary.

Beyond the major cities on the coasts, there has been a significant uptick in South Asian class enemies across smaller localities. More than three years ago in so-called 'minneapolis,' we saw Black proletarian rage spark a mass uprising that spread across the continent, only to be co-opted and pacified by opportunistic politicians and 'professional' activists. South Asians like Aisha Chughtai, Azrin Awal, and the newly-elected council member Aurin Chowdhury have each utilized alliances with the liberal-reformist non-profit industrial complex and 'BIPOC' revisionists to further their careers. And all at the expense of the colonized underclass that *actually* burned down the 3rd Precinct and looted stores along Lake Street. Those lumpen/prole youth still endure the daily terror of the predatory police, parasitic landlords, and dead-end jobs.

The 'progressive' politicians who present themselves as 'grassroots organizers' are most dangerous to revolutionary movements. Elected to city council within a year of the uprising, Aisha Chughtai has gained a reputation of being one of the more 'left-wing' politicians. Chughtai previously worked for Ilhan Omar and remains in the clique of DFL operatives and 'democratic socialists' who orbit the congressmember. Omar has perfected the art of advancing imperialism through an 'intersectional,' 'social justice' framework that emphasizes her identity as a Third-World Muslim woman. In that regard, Chughtai has learned from the best. Alongside many other opportunists and reformists, Chughtai has used all the right vaguely-'radical' buzzwords to push the Democrats' post-uprising counter-insurgency agenda, from evicting unhoused people 'humanely' to increasing police patrols in the name of 'public safety.' And in defining 'community control of the police' as simply "changing who is in charge of the police," she betrayed her own honest committment to the rotten neo-colonial politics of representation.

Ultimately the position of these 'progressives' within the state machinery makes their 'vocal' opposition to racial-capitalist rule meaningless. Recently, Chughtai was one of the only council members to issue a statement opposing the zionists' genocide of Palestinians. Just as her mentor Ilhan Omar will openly condemn the Palestinian Resistance one day and pretend to care about Muslims the next, Chughtai will pen

sympathetic statements while holding public office under the very regime built and *continuously* sustained by the genocide, dispossession, and super-exploitation of millions of Native, Black, and Third-World peoples. Attending pro-Palestine marches and rallies only distracts from the reality that she and her allies constitute a harmless 'loyal opposition.' To be in true solidarity with Palestine, one cannot be sworn in to serve the settler colony that directly supports, funds, and is the blueprint for the zionist entity. These politicians have no real issue with genocidal settlerism, seeing as they willingly and proudly participate in it here on these stolen lands. And as of early November 2023, we're seeing another South Asian add 'diversity' to the local representative body of white-supremacist capitalist rule.

Like her 'progressive' DFL peers, Aurin Chowdhury initially jumped on the abolitionist bandwagon before pivoting to a more 'respectable' defense of cops and settler property owners. Reflecting the reformist 'defund' campaign's loss of local influence, she has openly advocated for "trust with the police to be rebuilt in our community." Chowdhury's opportunism expresses an intense desire to integrate into an oppressive bloodsucking class so as to 'change it from within.' Her campaign pushed the routine 'progressive' talking points about 'improving' public transit, 'expanding' affordable housing, 'supporting' small businesses, which plays well for the comfortable class of euro-settler voters who live off the super-profits of imperialist extraction. Her drive to 'change the system from within' reduces the stuctural horrors of capitalism to merely problems of 'inequitable' public policy. It encapsulates the liberal petty-bourgeois class outlook. If both Chughtai and Chowdhury wanted to join the masses and engage in real class struggle for the exploited and oppressed, they would resign their positions on city council, sever ties with the DFL, and work on overcoming their internal attachment to bourgeois neo-colonial democracy. But maintaining a 'seat at the table'—alongside cop-loving zionists responsible for evicting and brutalizing hundreds of unhoused Native and Black peoples—seems to come first.

Turning our attention to New York City—the major hub of the neo-colonial bourgeoisie—we find South Asian politicians contorting themselves in attempts to tie their communities to u.s. imperialism. Shahana Hanif serves as the city council member representing the 39th District in Brooklyn. She is the daughter of Mohamed Hanif, an Awami League